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Appropriation for friendly Indians. Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting a communication from the Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, relative to an appropriation for the relief of certain friendly Indians

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APPROPRIATION FOR FRIENDLY INDIANS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

*A communication from the Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, relative to an appropriation for the relief of certain friendly Indians.*

MAY 29, 1868.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
*Washington, D. C., May 29, 1868.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a communication from the Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs of the 28th instant, enclosing the accompanying copies of letters from Superintendent Murphy *et al.*, with the indorsement of Commissioner Taylor, relative to the necessity of immediate provision being made for relieving the wants of friendly Indians in the northern, central, and southern superintendencies.

From the statements contained in these and other communications which I have heretofore transmitted to Congress, it will be seen that the condition of these Indians is distressing in the extreme; I therefore respectfully and earnestly urge upon Congress prompt action to avert starvation.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

O. H. BROWNING, *Secretary.*

Hon. SCHUYLER COLFAX,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, D. C., May 28, 1868.*

SIR: Referring to office report of the 16th ultimo, relative to the matter of providing for the subsistence of friendly Indians in the northern, central, and southern superintendencies, and also at such other places as the wants of the Indians and the good of the service may require, I now have the honor to enclose herewith copies of letters from Superintendent Murphy, Agents Wynkoop and Stover, and Special Agent Banks, with an indorsement of Commissioner Taylor, all in regard to the destitution of certain Indian tribes in the central superintendency and the necessity of supplying them with food.

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From the statements made in said letters, there can be no doubt of the destitution of the Indians therein referred to, and that great suffering, if not actual starvation, will be the result, if the issue of subsistence to them is stopped. Troubles and difficulties may also be expected between them and the settlers in their vicinity, unless supplies are continued to be furnished, or some other means are adopted to relieve their wants.

In view of these facts, and in compliance with the wishes of Commissioner Taylor, as expressed in his indorsement on Superintendent Murphy's letter of the 17th instant, it is respectfully recommended that copies of said letters be laid before Congress, with such favorable remarks thereon as may be deemed advisable, and the request that action be had in the premises by that body, at the earliest day practicable.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. E. MIX,  
*Acting Commissioner.*

Hon. O. H. BROWNING,  
*Secretary of the Interior.*

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OFFICE OF SPECIAL UNITED STATES INDIAN AGENT,  
*Lawrence, Kansas, May 12, 1868.*

SIR: Herewith enclosed I have the honor to transmit my report of the condition of the Indians in the district for which I have been appointed special agent.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALEX. R. BANKS,  
*Special United States Indian Agent.*

Hon. N. G. TAYLOR,  
*Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.*

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CAMP ON CHE-TO-PAH CREEK, OSAGE NATION,  
*May 11, 1868.*

SIR: Having been permitted to peruse the report of A. R. Banks, esquire, special commissary agent, on the subject of feeding Indians in my superintendency, and being requested by you to report to you my views in relation thereto, I have the honor to state that, from my personal knowledge of the Cheyenne, Arapahoe, and Apaches, the Osages, Kaws, and a portion of other tribes within my superintendency, they have been much benefited by the provisions issued to them; that they feel very grateful to the government for such assistance; that it has prevented deaths from starvation among them; has prevented stealing, and kept the plains Indians at peace, and that it is my honest conviction if these supplies are now withdrawn several of the Indians on reservations will suffer for food, and that it will have the effect of inciting the plains Indians to commit depredations on settlers and plunder unprotected trains, which will surely lead to another Indian war.

Believing that by continuing this humane policy of feeding these Indians they will remain at peace, and knowing by experience that it is far more economical to feed than to fight them, I would respectfully request the department to urge upon Congress the necessity and importance of making at an early day a sufficient appropriation to continue the feeding of these Indians.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOS. MURPHY,  
*Superintendent Indian Affairs.*

Hon. N. G. TAYLOR,  
*Commissioner Indian Affairs.*

OFFICE OF SPECIAL U. S. INDIAN AGENT,  
*Lawrence, Kansas, May 4, 1868.*

SIR: I have the honor to respectfully submit, in accordance with instructions, a report of the condition of the Indian tribes within the district for which I am special commissary agent. I desire to call your attention to a few suggestions derived from personal observation made on a trip to the plains from which I have just returned. The confederated tribes of Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and Apaches, which have heretofore caused so much trouble, especially during the last summer, I am gratified to report are now at perfect peace. No acts of hostility that I can learn have been committed since the council at Medicine Lodge creek, last October. They seem more deeply impressed than ever before with the solemnity of the treaties there formed, and, apparently, are determined in good faith to carry out their treaty stipulations. Their condition has in many respects been a deplorable one. The advancing tide of civilization has constantly pushed them further from the hunting-grounds of their fathers, and the chase, which is their main, and, I may say, only reliance for the support of themselves and their families, has been greatly circumscribed and limited by the rapid settlements which have followed the building of 350 miles of railway from the eastern boundary of Kansas, and which is now being vigorously pushed into the interior of the plains region; their hunting-grounds are being hedged in by settlements, and their game driven off by the approach of the whites. As a consequence, plundering to a certain extent upon unprotected trains and frontier settlements seemed a necessity of their existence; but when the treaties were made with them last fall, which contemplated their ultimate removal to reservations at the south, in the meanwhile their partial subsistence by the government—more charitable and humane and less expensive than a war of attempted subjugation and extensive nature—the reasons for these depredations ceased, and with the removal of the cause, the fact of their hostility is no longer witnessed. Having been among them unattended, and without an escort, and learning of no depredations, and, what is more remarkable, seeing no reports of outrages in the newspapers, I am safe in saying that none have been perpetrated; this I can only attribute to a more humane and enlightened policy towards them. In this connection I regret exceedingly to learn that further subsistence cannot be furnished, in consequence of the delay of Congress in making the necessary appropriation for this purpose, the funds heretofore appropriated being entirely exhausted. I feel that I would be derelict in duty did I not urge upon you the imperative necessity of a further continuance of supplies to this needy and destitute people. They expect and demand it, in accordance with the promises and agreement made to and with them last fall. The feuds between them and the Indians occupying reservations prevent them from hunting the buffalo; their only means of support, and I fear a renewal of hostilities and depredations upon the whites, should subsistence to these Indians be permanently stopped or longer withheld, in violation of the humane policy which has proved so effective, and in violation of the solemn pledges made to them. If the avoidance of an Indian war on the plains is desirable, as all must admit, it is doubly necessary that these agreements made with the Indians relative to furnishing them with supplies should be faithfully kept, for the reason that the grass is now sufficiently advanced to strengthen their horses, and the Indians consequently better prepared to carry on offensive warfare. While I have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that they will not fight if they are fed, I hesitate to hazard the opinion that they will not fight if they are not fed.

I desire also to call your attention to the very destitute condition of several of the tribes occupying reservations. The bitter hostility existing between them and the Indians of the plains has prevented them from hunting, and entirely cut them off from the game which has heretofore been their entire support, their

annuities being so insignificant as to be altogether insufficient for their support. As a correct instance of the present condition of these tribes, I would refer you to the Osage and Kaw Indians, numbers of whom would have undoubtedly perished from starvation had they not received supplies and assistance from the government.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALEX. R. BANKS,  
*Special United States Indian Agent.*

Hon. N. G. TAYLOR,  
*Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.*